

Mongolia

Nomad Descendants of the Golden Horde

By Arthur de Carle Sowerby

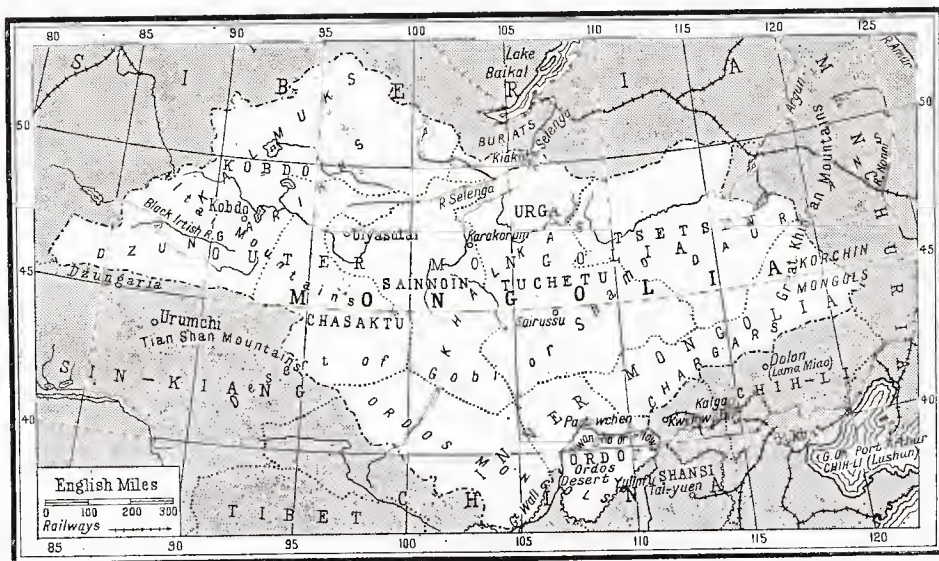
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MONGOLIA, of which the desert of Gobi, or Shamo, is one of the main physical features, is usually, but artificially, divided into two sections. These are Northern, or Outer, Mongolia and Southern, or Inner, Mongolia. Outer Mongolia comprises the northern part of the Gobi Desert as well as a strip of fertile country that belongs, topographically, to Southern Siberia. It is inhabited by the Daurians in the east, Khalkas in the middle, and the Dzungarians in the west; while its chief towns are Kiakhta, Urga, Karakorum, Ulyasutai, and Kobdo, Urga being the capital of Mongolia and the seat of the Bogdo, or Hutuktu, a Living Buddha who is the religious and political head of the true Mongolians.

These Outer Mongols are, for the most part, hunters and herdsmen, their herds consisting of horses, camels, sheep, oxen, and, in the west, reindeer. Except for those who live in the large settlements

or towns, they go in for a partial annual migration, driving their flocks and herds up into the splendid pasturages of the slopes of the Altai, Tian Shan, and other lesser ranges during the summer, and returning to the flat lands for the winter. They are wild, intrepid horsemen of a genial, though somewhat cruel, disposition, owning a loose allegiance to the Hutuktu, who in turn owns an allegiance, very unsatisfactory to himself and to all true Mongols, to the Chinese Government. Recently, however, the Soviet Government of Russia has gained considerable ascendancy in Urga, and it is difficult to make out who is master in this large and important part of Central Asia.

The Daurians inhabit the valley of the Nonni, a large tributary of the Sungari river, itself a tributary of the mighty Amur, and it is believed that the Mongols originated as a distinct race of Tartars in this area. They live



MONGOLIA AND ITS NOMAD TRIBES

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the nomad life typical of all Mongols. Their country consists mainly of grassy steppes, interspersed with patches of wind-blown sand. The Great Khingan Mountains form a barrier between their territory and the rest of Mongolia, though these have not proved sufficient to prevent the desert from encroaching upon the more fertile terrain of Manchuria.

The whole of Northern Mongolia along the Siberian border is extremely fertile, great forests prevailing and extending westward into Dzungaria. There are, however, wide stretches of rolling grasslands where no trees of any sort occur.

The Inner Mongols occupy the southern part of the Gobi Desert, as well as what are known as the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, where the equine herds of the emperors of China used to range; the famous Ordos Desert, that lies within the northern loop of the Yellow River; and the more or less arid area that lies to westward.

Though in many ways much like their northern relations, these Inner

Mongols are plainsmen. They have no fine mountains with rich upland pastures to visit in the summer, those of the grasslands serving them in good stead.

Assembled under the banners of petty kings or princes, the most important groups are the Korchin Mongols in the extreme east, where Mongolia and Manchuria meet, the Changers to the north of Chih-li and Shansi, northern provinces of China, and the Ordos Mongols in the west.

Herdsmen by inheritance and instinct, some few of them have, nevertheless, taken to the plough, following in this the example of their southern neighbours, the Chinese, who for the past two centuries have been encroaching steadily upon their territory, turning the pasture into wheatfields, planting villages and building cities where once only encampments and groups of yurts, or felt tents, found an occasional resting-place.

The Inner Mongols are far more securely under the rule of the Chinese Government than are the Outer Mongols,



MUSICAL METHODS THAT NEVER FAIL TO EXCITE GENEROSITY

A wanderer among wanderers, this Mongol with his wife makes his way about the valleys bordering the steppes, the mighty "Land of Grass" that can support both man and his flocks, and playing and singing his raucous melodies to the nomadic herdsmen who roam the plains in search of "pastures new," gathers in largesse sufficient to keep body and soul together



MONGOLIA: ELEGANT LADY OF HIGH DEGREE

All married women wear a headdress with silver and jewelled trimmings—the first gift of the lover to his bride; the silver sheaths casing the plaits are worn only by devotees of Fashion

and in many ways their history, especially of late years, has been a sad one.

When the late Manchu dynasty in China was overthrown, and a republic declared, the Mongols, as a whole, refused to come under the new regime, declaring their independence. True to the instincts of most newly-formed republics, China could not tolerate the secession of any part of what formerly comprised the Celestial Empire, albeit that empire had been formed by an alien conqueror, the Manchu. A war was begun against the Mongols, and, naturally, the brunt of the fighting fell upon those of the south. These fought heroically against overwhelming odds, as China at that time was able to put a large force of well-equipped troops into the field. It was guerrilla warfare, and the mobile Mongol forces played havoc for a time with the slow-moving Chinese soldiery, thereby earning the fear and hatred of the latter. Meanwhile, negotiations had been going on between the new republican government in China and the Hutuktu in Urga, and finally this dignitary was persuaded to give up Inner Mongolia and place that large section of country under the five-barred flag of New China. To this the Inner Mongols, who, with considerable reason, feared retribution and reprisals at the hands of the Chinese for their successful attacks upon republican troops, would not agree. They were proscribed as outlaws and banditti by the Urga Government, and were attacked from



MODERN DESCENDANT OF JENGHIZ KHAN

His thick winter overcoat of silk with its embroideries and fur cuffs, and his handsome boots, proclaim him a man of means in Mongolia. He belongs to the Lama Church, and devoutly practises all its easier observances

both sides, the Hutuktu having agreed to assist the Chinese in stamping out what was now called brigandage in Inner Mongolia.

There followed a campaign of extermination, in which the wretched Inner Mongols, caught between the upper and nether millstones, were hard put to it to hold their own. One large force, under a prince, sued for peace. They were told that if they would surrender, come into the Chinese lines, and give up their arms, they would be well treated. This they did, only to be treacherously massacred as soon as

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MONGOL CHARMS

Woman's status is low, her life hard, and her beauty soon fading. Yet she is as well dressed as her husband's means will allow

they had parted with their weapons. At the present time it may be taken that Inner Mongolia is part of the Chinese republic, while Outer Mongolia, though nominally under the same government, is more or less mixed up with the Soviet Government of Russia and Siberia. The Buriats, who are also Mongols, living round the southern shores of Lake Baikal in Siberia,

are, of course, under Russian rule. In a total area of about 1,368,000 square miles there is a population estimated at 2,500,000. Becoming the prey of stronger and more vigorous peoples, the Mongols are, apparently, doomed to extinction, especially as in common with the Tartar races of Manchuria, the Amur Basin, and Eastern Siberia generally, they are becoming less and less prolific. They had a chance once of becoming a great nation, but they used their opportunities only to carry sword, fire, and destruction over the greater part of the continents of Asia and Europe. Under Jenghiz Khan they held under their iron yoke almost the whole of Asia during the thirteenth century.

Jenghiz proclaimed himself khan in 1206, and



WHERE THE GLORY IS IN THE CROWNING

Many of Mongolia's people live in greatest poverty, and luxuries are the exception. One extravagance, however, they allow themselves; the gorgeous bedecking of their wives' heads in the manner shown above. Two red spots on the cheeks indicate rank

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thereafter his armies spread his conquests in rapid succession through Northern China and Turkistan to Bokhara, Samarkand, and into Georgia by 1222. They crossed the Indus to Lahore and sacked Herat, while further campaigns made them masters of almost the whole of the Chinese empire. Again, in the fourteenth century, as the Golden Horde, they captured and held European Russia, repeating in the process the excesses of their predecessors. In Asia they have at different times held China, and have even penetrated India, but they have never been able to withstand the degenerating influence of a

luxurious court life, and in the end have been driven out of the countries they conquered so easily.

The relationship between the Mongols and the Chinese along the region of the Great Wall has never been a cordial one. The Northern Chinese are colonists and farmers of a very high order, and naturally they cast covetous eyes upon the fertile prairie-like grasslands, or Tsao-ti, as they call them, that lie immediately to the north of their own country. By intrigue, barter, and, it must be confessed, trickery, they have acquired large sections of this desirable territory, from



QUAINT FREAKS OF FASHION THAT PLEASE MONGOLIAN WIVES

Padded shoulders with chequered sleeves of grotesque length are the salient points of these ladies' strange dress, which shows how world-wide is the desire for adornment extraordinary. But the crowning effect is produced by the winged headdress through which the hair is threaded, hanging pendent from the extremities. Shoes with pointed toes complete this truly surprising accoutrement

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which the herds of the Mongols have, of course, been excluded. Year by year the Mongols have seen their grazing grounds diminish; year by year they have watched the Chinese push farther north, and it is only human nature that

but not to quite the same extent as elsewhere. Conditions there are very much more inimical to the tiller of the soil, and, though numerous Chinese farmers have settled well beyond the Chinese boundary and by dint of much hard work,

the planting of trees to prevent the continual shifting of the vast sea of sand that rolls in from the north, and careful irrigation where such is possible, have made parts of the desert fertile, the greater part of the sand-waste is still unoccupied, and can only be inhabited by herdsmen and tent-dwellers of a very hardy type.

In journeying north from the border town of Kalgan, which lies to the north-west of Peking, and the importance of which as a trading centre has grown enormously since the advent of the railway, the traveller at first passes through country entirely settled by Chinese. The only Mongols that may be encountered are those bringing in caravans of camels and ox-drawn carts, laden with raw produce such as wool, skins, hides, and salt. The last comes from some of the great salt lakes or lagoons of the Gobi, and is, of course, a government (Chinese) monopoly.



TRAPPINGS THAT BESET A MONGOL PRINCESS

Royal lineage and regal adorning grace this Mongolian princess in her bejewelled and beaded headdress that rustles with soft clash at every movement of her head. The full, smooth cheeks and narrowing eyes are the dominant features of her race

Photo, Adam Warwick

a bitter hatred should have sprung up. Thus, when war broke out, it was bound to be of a very savage nature. Wild horsemen swooped down upon the defenceless Chinese farmers, murdered, pillaged, and burned, and the Chinese, when their chance came, took terrible revenge.

Along the Ordos border the Chinese are also pushing into Mongol territory,

These men are sturdy, broad-faced, good-natured sons of the wilderness, clad in flowing robes or furs, according to the season. They are dirty, but of genial temperament. Nearly always they are mounted, either on horses or camels, for they hate walking. Indeed, their large, clumsy boots are ill-suited to the latter exercise. When once the Chinese settlements are left behind and the untilled

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grass-lands open out, one may see in the distance the blue smoke of Mongol encampments. No longer will build-ings, unless it be an occasional temple or monastery, greet the eye, but in their place yurts, the peculiar rounded tents, typical of the Mongol people, lie in little scattered groups. These yurts are composed each of a ring-wall of trellis work, surmounted with a huge frame-work roof, like the hub and ribs of an umbrella, the whole covered with large sheets of felt, which are tied in place with ropes of horse-hair. There is a doorway with a wooden frame and small folding doors, while light is admitted, and smoke escapes, through a hole in the roof. A fire-place, consisting of a few hearthstones, or some-times a raised mud plat-form, occupies the centre of the floor, while the family chattels, earthen-ware utensils, small cup-boards, lacquer boxes, and the like, line the walls of the tent. On the side opposite the door is the family altar, with an image of some sort. Rugs, dressed skins, and garments lie round about, and on these may be seen the recumbent forms of the members of the family to whom the yurt belongs, or casual visitors paying one of their numerous calls, for the Mongols are an extremely sociable people, and are for ever visiting each other's tents. Out-side the yurt there is usually a huge pile of argol, the dried excrement of cattle, sheep, or camels, which is the only fuel used by the Mongols. There may be a water trough by the well,

which, with the flag, or prayer pole, facing the door of the tent, completes the camp equipment.

Round about may be seen lean sheep and goats, small red or black cattle, and, in the distance, herds of small horses,



PRINCE OF THE MONGOLS IN IMPERIAL GARB

With the dignity that befits his position, this princely descendant of the great Tartar khans, Jenghiz and Kublai, sits, proud in the consciousness of ancestors whose power was a terror and whose name a fear through all the bounds of Asia

Photo, Adam Warwick

or ponies. Fierce dogs, that look like wolves, guard the camp, and the stranger is well advised to keep his weather eye on the brutes when approaching the place.

Life with the Mongols is simple and primitive. Their only cares are the welfare of their herds, the gathering and drying of argol, the milking of their cows, the making of butter and cheese,



OFFICIAL AMUSEMENT IN MONGOLIA

Though the responsibilities of office have lent a splendour to his outward appearance, the cares of authority do not weigh too much upon the spirits of this cheerful member of the official class. His robe is silk, with a dragon pattern

Those that are not engaged in caravan work attend to the selling of horses, some of them making long journeys into China in order to dispose of their stock.

The milking and manufacture of cheese and butter is done by the women, while both men and women join in the rolling of the felt. The women make their own clothing and that of their men folk, often even to the caps and boots, though these are usually bought from the Chinese in the large towns along the borders. In winter the clothes worn by the Mongols are mainly of quilted cotton, though skins and furs are extensively used. In summer they either wear unquilted cotton clothes, or greatly reduce the number of their winter garments. Many of them are extremely poor, and so make one suit of garments do for both summer and winter. They are fond of gay colours, dull red, yellow, and blue predominating. Their crowning glory is in the silver, coral, and turquoise headdress of the women. It is said that the wealth of a Mongol is to be gauged by the richness of his wife's headdress, and that some of them put all their spare cash, when they have any, into thus

and the manufacture of felt and ropes from the wool and hair of their beasts. In winter they hunt antelopes, or gazelles, which swarm on the plains.

decorating their women folk. The women can ride as well as the men, and are far from being the timid and subdued creatures one might expect



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TOGETHER BRAVE THE SUSPECTED CAMERA

In certain parts of Mongolia exists an unpleasant belief about the European camera to the effect that children's eyes are commandeered for the construction of the lens. Consequently it is difficult to persuade a mother to bring her child into proximity with this mechanism of ominous repute. The simplicity of the daughter's dress contrasts markedly with her mother's, seen in another form on page 3523



AMONG THE RANK AND FILE OF THE MONGOLIAN POPULATION

Social differences in Mongolia are usually defined by the size of a man's herds or the number of his servants. Though sparing by nature, hospitality—according to their means—is the outstanding virtue of the Mongols, but a childlike simplicity in their dealings with neighbours is apt to be abused, and astute Chinese succeed in winning their confidence, usually to their detriment

to find in a country where the members of their sex have no more rights than cows and horses. They appear happy, are always laughing, are care-free, and untamed. Many of them are quite comely, and among the Ordos Mongols some may even be called beautiful. The men are kind to them in a rough, good-natured way, but always they are made to understand that man is the master, and the punishment for lifting hand against a man, or for using abusive language to him, even though he be a stranger, is usually the whipping-post. The entertainment of a stranger for one day and night is incumbent upon the owner of a tent, should such be sought, but, unless specially invited to do so, the traveller should not stay longer.

A feature of the whole of Mongolia, and especially of Inner Mongolia, is the number of monasteries that lie scattered

in every direction. These are imposing edifices, standing out upon the plains, solemn and grand. They harbour large numbers of monks, or lamas, and are supported by compulsory contributions from the people of the district over which they have control. While Mongols are nomadic, they are not allowed to move out of certain prescribed areas, over which princes, or, in some cases monasteries, rule, and everybody in each such area belongs, body and soul, to the prince or monastery that controls it.

Only one son in every family is allowed to remain a layman, to attend to the herds, and to raise a family. The others enter the sacred precincts of some monastery at an early age, and there become celibate lamas. Later they may leave the monastery and indulge in ordinary pursuits, but they

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are not supposed to marry. This rule is rapidly falling into abeyance, and everywhere priests may be seen with regular families. Though mainly of a religious significance, there is, or was, undoubtedly, an economic motive behind the adoption of this law, for by its means the population of the country has been kept within the limit of what it can support.

There seems to be little doubt that it was the advent and influence of Buddhism in Mongolia that finally checked the increase and sporadic irruptions of the Mongols, which led to their sweeping inundations and conquests of both Asia and Europe. Had these people remained Shamanists and demon worshippers in practice, as they are still at heart, the last few centuries in Asia, and probably also in Europe as well, would have had a different tale to tell.

The Mongols are extremely cruel in their handling of criminals. The state prison at Urga is probably the worst place of its kind in the world. Each prisoner is confined in a wooden box, which prevents him from standing, sitting, or lying down with comfort. Food is served to him through a small hole. The boxes are piled one on top of another in a room without windows, and there the wretched victims serve their sentences, usually dying long before these expire. Horrible tortures are still used in dealing with serious offenders. Justice, if it can be called such, is dispensed by the chieftains, or local Chinese officials, where such occur, and is of a purely arbitrary nature.

The Hutuktu lives in Urga, where he keeps up a certain display of grandeur, and is surrounded by specially picked guards. These are men of unusual



MEN OF MONGOLIA VERSED IN MYSTERIOUS LORE

Yellow-robed brothers of the Yellow Faith, they are for ever telling their rosaries, whispering the orison, or turning the prayer-wheels. Many of these lamas, who make one-third of the population, gather together forming separate communities, their convents being mere clusters of tents. Great respect is paid to them, and they are readily supported by the laity



CENTAUR OF THE WILD EASTERN PLAINS

Of their many old formidable qualities the Mongols retain but few; their extraordinarily fine horsemanship has, however, in no way diminished—undoubtedly due to their inherent laziness, for they appear to be unwilling to use their own legs

stature and physique, and they are drawn from all over the country. His power depends entirely upon the fact that he is supposed to be a reincarnation of Buddha, and so one of great holiness. The Mongols are an intensely religious as well as a superstitious race, and it is only by appealing to this side of their natures that they can be held under any kind of control.

The most important town in Inner Mongolia is Dolon, or Lama Miao. Here are some famous temples, and every summer an important function, known as the "devil dance," is held. This is also the occasion for a big fair, and horse races are held to give the opportunity for dealers from China to judge the merits

of the animals they wish to buy. During the three days of the fair, a great many people visit the temples, and the scenes are very picturesque and gay. Dolon is in reality a Chinese town, and lies within the limits of the boundaries of the province of Chih-li, though fully a hundred miles beyond the outer loop of the Great Wall. It is interesting to note that beyond the present wall, which itself has fallen into considerable disrepair, lie the remains of several other walls, each of which at some remote date marked the boundary between China and her northern turbulent neighbour.

The Ordos Desert is virtually a sea of sand, with here and there a sort of oasis, where lagoons of brackish water are flanked with flats, on which coarse grass and stubble grow. The sand is in the form of dunes, and often all that the eye can see,

as one stands on some eminence, is nothing for miles and miles but these shifting sand dunes, stretching, wave upon wave, to the horizon. In places coarse scrub and low bushes occur in belts, possibly marking the subterranean bed of some river. These are usually full of all kinds of animals, notably pikas, gerbils, or sand rats, hares, susliks, and hedgehogs, as well as foxes and various mustelines, which feed upon the smaller animals. Sometimes one comes upon patches of a kind of scrub juniper, whose green colour lends a pleasing note to the eternal yellow of the sand.

There is little difference between the people of the Ordos and the other

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Mongols, but their ponies and cattle are smaller, owing, doubtless, to the more scanty herbage, than are those from the grasslands and Outer Mongolia. They seem to go in more for sheep herding in the Ordos, the famous Ningsia lamb skins being drawn from this area. Ningsiafu is one of the most important of the cities on the Ordos border, Yulinfu being another. Boroalgassu is an important Mongol town and monastery in the extreme south. The tomb of the great Kublai Khan is supposed to lie somewhere in the northern part of the Ordos Desert.

The main trade route across Mongolia is from Kalgan to Urga, a distance of

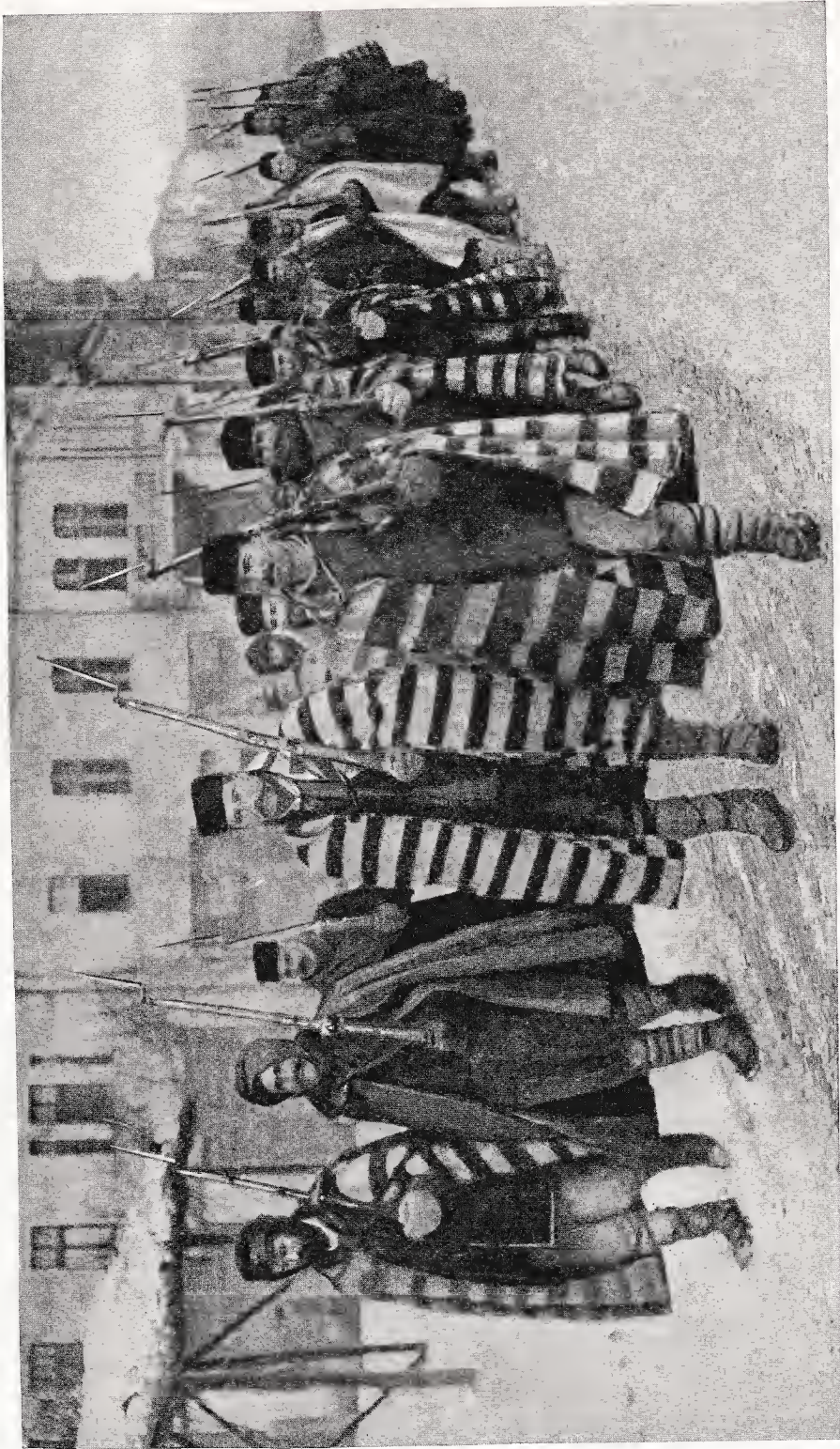
about eight hundred miles. This journey is usually done by camels, the beasts either carrying the traveller and his baggage upon their backs, or drawing a large, closed-in cart. The latter method of travel is usually resorted to in winter, for then the winds that sweep the Mongolian plateau are so severe as to render any other means extremely uncomfortable.

Within the last few years a European company has come into existence for the purpose of trading in Mongolia, and it has inaugurated a service of motor-cars that run between Kalgan and Urga, doing the journey in anything from four days to a week.



MONGOLIAN COWBOY OF THE GOBI PLAINS

The great Gobi Desert, the heart of Mongolia, is the eastern end of a belt of arid land that stretches almost across Asia. Numerous nomadic Mongols range these vast tracts with their camels, horses, and sheep, leading a primitive and hardy existence; and this jovial cowboy, with his lengthy whip and shaggy sheepskin, is as robust as his sturdy, surefooted pony



MONTENEGRIN SOLDIERS MARCHING OUT OF CETIGNE TO TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE BATTLE LINE

For five hundred years fighting has been the chief preoccupation of the Montenegrins, and the army of the little country has always comprised the whole of its male population. Grimly, in earnest, these born warriors disdain the purely spectacular trappings of militarism, and their field service outfit differs little from their dress in ordinary daily life.

What uniformity it has is provided by the kapa, the crimson cap with black silk border and five gold braids symbolising the blood shed in five centuries of glorious resistance to the Turk since the black disaster of Kossovo